(b) No, Sir. People from all segments of the population can fall victim to HIV/AIDS.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. In general, it is accurate. However, that affected people are unable to afford the anti- retroviral drugs. Anti-retroviral prophylaxis is being provided to Public Sector hospitals for disbursement to health care providers in the event of an accidental exposure to HIV/ AIDS.

Second, in order to prevent Mother to Child transmission, single dose Nevirsapine is being administered to both HIV positive pregnant mother and her baby. Most of the generic anti-retroviral drugs are being manufactured within India.

In order to make the drugs accessible and available at affordable prices, Government has waived the excise duty on these drugs.

News-Item, "Lasik can lead to complications: Expert"

79. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Lasik can lead to complications: Expert", which appeared in the Times of India, dated the 27th September, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Every surgery carries risk of complications, which can be minimized by proper selection of patients, training of surgeons and following standard procedures. The Directorate General of Health Services has prepared draft guidelines for eye surgeons to minimize risk of complications and unfavourable outcome following Lasik surgery.